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ABSTRACT

This document presents a step-by-step approach to a community development process for addressing child care needs in rural Canada. Part 1 of the document introduces the need for child care in rural areas in Canada and describes challenges to meetings those needs. This section also presents the principles underlying community development and outlines a five-step community development process. A list of resources for rural communities is provided, and a number of successful rural child care initiatives are highlighted. Parts 2 through 6 of the document detail the implementation of the community development process, using a fictitious rural community to illustrate the process. The basic steps to this community development process are: (1) get started through investigating interest in child care, finding factual information on the current situation, and beginning to build community support; (2) form a community alliance by bringing together people from many parts of the community with diverse interests, skills, and knowledge to form a group to work together towards a common goal; (3) clarify purpose and define direction through clarifying group goals, deciding on options, and defining methods to achieve the goals; (4) take action by working together as a flexible volunteer group; and (5) sustain involvement by maintaining the original momentum and adapting the original plan to a changing environment, while recognizing the accomplishment of the group. (KB)

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Ontario
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

INFOPACK
December 1996

The Rural Community Development Process To Address Rural Child Care Needs

Developed through a partnership with Ontario Rural Child Care Committee, and Sharon Gardiner, O.M.A.F.R.A.

Part A -- Introduction

Rural communities have a history of working together to improve their community. This spirit of co-operation, commitment to the community, caring for one another, and resourcefulness will help them find solutions that work. Communities across the country are taking steps to find their own way of providing services and dealing with issues using the community development process.

Although all rural communities have some things in common, each area has its own needs. The characteristics of the community, the services and organizations present, and the specific needs, all influence the solutions. Rural communities face many challenges: low employment; youth leaving and not returning; aging population; difficult access to recreational programs; old systems and buildings; and limited child care options. When planning child care services, rural communities face large geographic distances, lack of public transportation, and a limited tax base to support programs.

Farm Safety Association, Inc.

As the population expects more and different services, the demands on the community increase. The community development process is a way the community can deal with issues and address needs. Each community knows best how to deal with its circumstances.

There are ongoing efforts to address the child care needs of families in rural areas. Rural parents are often a long way from services and other parents. There are seasonal demands on families involved in a wide variety of businesses including farming, tourism or natural resource based industries. During peak seasons, the working hours are very long, so extended hours for child care are needed. The parent-farmer may have difficulty performing both child care and farming roles. Operating a farm and providing child care does not promote efficiency or safety for the operator or the child. In the case of farm families, the workplace, with heavy machinery in operation and other hazards, is sometimes the site for child care.

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A process has emerged, and is gaining support, as successful initiatives are developed. The process, with a basic order of steps, is called the **community development process**. The process is adaptable to many different situations, communities and issues.

Community Development is the process of the community coming together around its shared goals. It involves community members developing a sense of common vision. It is an inclusive process which reaches out to all segments of the community to ensure everyone participates in identifying the community's needs, making decisions and taking action. Community development is based on the following principles:

- wide-spread participation
- self-reliance
- broad-based leadership
- sustainable, long-term development (25+ years)
- innovative partnerships between government, business and community groups from the culture, economic, social and environment sectors

Healthy communities have community spirit, adequate and affordable social services, a safe environment and opportunities for people to earn a fair living. More and more communities will rely on leaders who can work with other citizens to meet the needs identified by their communities.

The community development process is adaptable to different situations. The basic steps are:

Get Started - investigate the interest in the issue, find factual information on the current situation and begin to build community support. Part B explains this step in detail.

Form a Community Alliance -- bring together people from many parts of the community, with diverse interests, skills and knowledge to form a group to work together towards a common goal (Part C).

Clarify Purpose and Define Direction -- clarify group goals, decide on options and define methods to work together to achieve the goals (Part D).

Take Action -- work together as a flexible volunteer group. People must be able to work with ambiguity, uncertainty and different opinions. Leaders must know what must be done. (Part E).

Sustain Involvement -- maintain the initial momentum, and adapt the original plan to a changing environment, while recognizing the accomplishment of the group (Part F).

The next page is a list of resources. The following page highlights a number of successful rural child care initiatives. The rest of the INFOPACK is separated into sections which give more detail on the process steps described above. Each section will simultaneously illustrate the steps and how these have been implemented in a rural community. The left side details the process steps, and the right side follows a fictitious community as it looks at the child care situation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

•The Rural Community Development Process To Address The Rural Child Care Issue (complete)
or Part A -- Introduction
Part B -- Get Started
Part C -- Form A Community Alliance
Part D -- Clarify Purpose and Define Direction
Part E -- Take Action
Part F -- Sustain Involvement
can be obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

•Selected OMAFRA Fact Sheets:
How You Can Be An Effective Leader
Program Planning for Organizations
Promoting Your Organization's Activities
Fundraising For Your Organization
Starting An Organization
Managing Issues: A Guide For Leaders
Working With Volunteers
Recruiting Volunteers
Volunteers: The Heart of Community Organizations
Effective Community Decision Making
Effective Meetings
Effective Committees
and many more.

•Ministry of Community and Social Services Publications
It's Your Child's Care
Child Care Options:
Child Care Centres
Home Child Care
School-aged Care
Recognizing Quality in Child Care
Introducing Your Child to Child Care

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

•Rural Ontario Child Care In Transition, Ontario Farm Women's Network, June 1995.

•Using Your Home For Day Care, Revenue Canada

•Rural Child Care in Ontario, A background paper for a conference on rural child care. Co-sponsored by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Gillian Doherty, Ph.D., January, 1994

•Yours, Mine And Ours: Ontario's Children and Youth, Premier's Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice, Queen's Printer of Ontario, 1994

•Women in Rural Life, The Changing Scene, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1984.

•On the Farm, Children Are At Constant Risk, Ontario Farm Safety Association, March 1995, Fact Sheet No. F-018

•Rural Child Care Survey Project 1988-1991, Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

•Flexible Child Care in Canada, A report on child care for evenings, overnight and weekends, emergencies and ill children and in rural areas. Martha Friendly, Gordon Cleveland, Tricia Willis, May, 1989.

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Special thanks to Walkerton and District Literacy Council

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HOW OTHERS HAVE MET RURAL CHILD CARE NEEDS

The following are brief descriptions of actions implemented in communities across Ontario. There are many other excellent examples which are not listed here. To find out what is happening in your area contact the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services office (see the Blue Pages).

Scugog Teen Parent Advisory Committee

The Scugog Teen Parent Advisory Committee (STPAC) was established in Durham Region. In partnership with a wide range of community groups and teen parents, a committee was formed to identify and negotiate the use of community resources as well as to plan and implement service activities.

In order to reach teen parents, activities had to have an immediate pay off for them and had to be diverse enough to attract a rather varied group of young people. The STPAC oversees a Community Kitchen, Community Garden, Teen Dads' Group, Cooking Class and the beginning of a Toy Lending Library and Clothing Exchange. Teens have received individual and group instruction and support. Transportation is an issue, but there have been offers from volunteer drivers. Evaluations indicate positive results from the teen parents such as lifestyle changes, better utilization of community resources, and supporting each other.

Kathleen Pasquet, P.O. Box 20004, Newcastle, Ont. L1B 1M3 phone/fax 905-987-4830

Bruce Peninsula Licensed Day Care

The community development process resulted in the licensing of a day care centre for Wiarton. The centre has been stable for three years, and as a result of community input, recently expanded.

Two parents started by contacting MCSS regarding the need for child care on the peninsula. A survey to access needs was followed by a meeting of interested parties i.e. health, social services, parents, MCSS. After presentations, small groups discussed their needs. Sharing small group discussions with the entire group helped set the vision and goals. A small executive was formed to carry out initial steps. Committees were formed to do a larger community needs survey, find a location, set policy, file for incorporation and obtain licensing.

Rosalind Brooks, MCSS, Owen Sound 519-376-1951

Perth Care For Kids

Six hub based programs are now available in Perth county as a result of follow up to a survey in 1986:

1. Resource Centre and Mobile Toy Lending Library
2. Playgroups and Drop-In Programs
3. Licensed Home Child Care
4. Nursery School
5. Rural In-Home Child Care
6. Child Care Centre

The Board of Directors has actively pursued funding to support the programs. A unique program to address farm safety issues as it relates to child care is the Rural In-Home Child Care Program. Post secondary students were hired for the summer to provide child care in the child's home.

Jean Ann Goll, Perth Care For Kids, R.R. #5, Mitchell, Ont. N0K 1N0 519-348-8618

Part B -- Get Started

Background

A young family is concerned about finding child care for their children. Joe is a cash crop farmer. June works in the local grocery store. They have two children.

Joe's parents helped with child care after the first child was born, but now it is just too much for them. They want to enjoy their retirement--go south in the winter, and garden in the summer. June's parents live 200 kilometres away.

June and Joe's first child is now in school full-time so after school care is needed. Full-time care is needed for the second child, who is now three.

Theory

Begin the community development process by talking to others in the community about the issue. Find out what others think about an issue or concern. Are others interested? Is something already being done? What facts are known?

> In 1961, 65% of Canadian families consisted of a male wage-earner and a stay-at-home spouse. In 1991 only 12% of Canadian families were like this.
> -Yours, Mine and Ours: Ontario's Children and Youth

If others seem to be interested, take a deeper look at all sectors of the community. Identify others who have a stake in this matter. What organizations would have (or should have) an interest in this issue? What population segments are affected? Who do you need to have on your side to make something happen in your community? Are there people from outside the community who may have financial or human resources who can help?

Getting the community interested enough to take some action is difficult. One or two committed

Practice

June decided to talk to other moms at a parenting seminar she was attending to see if they had similar problems. Two other women decided to help June by making some phone calls. They would talk to their friends and others they knew in the community. They divided up a list of people to call e.g. Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), township, children's services and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), to find out what information and resources each had, and determine their interest in the initiative.

June wrote an article for the local paper about the challenges she and other parents face when trying to find child care. Information on working with the media from OMAFRA was used as a guide. This was a step toward educating the community about the importance of child care options. Some reactions to the article told June that there were a lot of people who really didn't understand. She heard a lot of comments like: "After all, there is a day care in town!" and "You should be at home looking after your own children."

The preliminary networking done by June and her friends helped them get more information on the topic. They began to develop a picture of the

Theory, continued

people are not enough to sustain any resulting action. It can take years of talking about an issue

to bring the community to the point of being willing to address the issue. Try not to be disheartened. You may be thinking about the issue before others have experienced it. Your perception of the situation may be different than others because you have different values and expectations. During this stage, it is important to decide if the community is ready to take action. (See below).

This initial networking and scouting activity can be crucial to your future success. Gaging the support in the community, finding out more information about the issue, and identifying key people will set you and your community up to move to the next step in the process. (See Part C -- Form a Community Alliance)

Practice, continued

current situation and where they might go from here. The group wanted to find out how many child care spaces there are now and the cost of space per child. They also wanted to know the number of children using child care, the number of families who want child care, family incomes, and what was considered affordable child care.

They met a week later at the local coffee shop to share findings. Frank, from the child care centre in town, was really interested. He called the Chamber of Commerce, noting lack of appropriate child care may limit a person's ability to work. When the group began putting the names of those they contacted together, they came up with a list of 20 people who would be interested in attending an information meeting.

"The reality of rural communities is that there is often no extended family nearby to assist in child care." – Tony Morris, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture

IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

* community **spirit**
* a **vision** to guide development
* willingness to **invest** in the community
* **understanding** the community's systems in light of the changing world economy and social structure
* leaders who can **build partnerships**
* leaders with the **capacity** to seek information and make decisions
* **commitment** to long term planning and action
* strong **communication** networks
* finding what is **unique** to a community
* being willing to be **innovative**
* an **active core** of community workers
* organizing and **maximizing** human and financial resources

Source: Effective Community Decision Making, OMAFRA Fact Sheet

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Part C – Form a Community Alliance

Theory

Forming an alliance within the community can be very effective. **An alliance can:**

- improve communication and create greater awareness
- result in shared resources
- make actions more relevant
- confirm the identified need
- build greater community support, and
- create trust and openness

A community is made up of four main sectors: human, social, economic and environment. Each sector needs representation. When all sectors are involved a well-rounded long-term solution is possible.

To ensure **representation of all sectors**, brainstorm a list of people or organizations which represent each sector. For example, community voice might be the media, community leaders, or respected individuals. Familial relations may be from churches, social services, or parent organizations. The local manufacturer may represent industry, the chamber of commerce, commercial services, and farm leaders representing agriculture.

Groups or individuals will not all participate at the same level or in the same way. Some people will lead the project and do most of the work. Others will be more comfortable carrying smaller **Theory,**

Practice

Progress Report *– June is a parent of two children. The availability of care that matches the family's schedule and is close by has been a challenge for her farm family. June and some friends began talking to others about their child care concerns and gathering information. They now know that others are interested in the issue and that it may be worthwhile pursuing further.*

June, Frank and friends decided that a community meeting would be the most effective way of getting input on the child care issue for their community. With help from OMAFRA staff, they checked their list to see if all sectors were represented. They realized that the health, municipal, manufacturing and educational sectors were not represented. They prepared a list of all the things they needed to do to prepare for the meeting. The OMAFRA facilitator organized discussion groups so the committee could participate.

Community Meeting Preparations

- contact health organizations, **Frank**
- contact school, **June**
- contact Mayor, Reeve, **Sally**
- book library meeting hall, **Fatima**
- confirm date, time, place, attendance with previous contacts, **Sally / Fatima**
- coffee and cookies, **Frank**
- AV equipment, **June**
- open invitation advertisement and media contact, **Sally**

On meeting night, the enthusiasm increased as everyone participated. Those planning the meeting were encouraged by the number and variety of people that came. There were retired teachers, university students, and grandparents that were interested in the availability of child care.

Five people actually volunteered to form the core group to take the next steps and keep everyone

continued

parts of the workload, while others will choose to give financial support but not be directly involved. Participants must recognize and accept that this is the best way to get the job done.

To form a community alliance, it is best to have participants **meet face to face** at some stage. To facilitate this meeting, you may need to make personal contact with key community groups and individuals. An alternative may be a mail out survey. Each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. The participation at the forming alliances stage is dependent on the thoroughness and support gathered at the getting started stage. The wider the participation in the alliance, the more appropriate the actions will be for your community.

A **community meeting** is an effective way to discuss and reach consensus on whether there is sufficient need and support to proceed. An outside facilitator can help guide the discussion through some logical steps. Reviewing the current situation, the factual information available, having general discussion, and sharing interests and possible roles can be items for the agenda.

A **facilitator** can help the group reach consensus on whether it wishes to proceed further. Some decisions need to be made and a commitment from some people to take the project to the next stage. A core group can be formed to investigate and formulate the next steps. The core group, to keep the process open and keep interest high, must continue to keep others informed and bring them into the process.

The **media** can be an ally throughout the community development process. A report on results of the community meeting in the paper, or on the community television station can help build support for future actions. The media can help keep the community informed as plans and priorities are decided. Publicity may also result in volunteers to help! (See Part D – Clarify Purpose and Define Direction)

Practice, continued

informed of progress. The volunteers were given a job description so they would know what was expected of them. Some other people that were not at the meeting were also asked to help. This was the start of a community alliance to address the rural child care issue. More people would be called in as needed.

During a break, the students gathered together and began to discuss forming a network among themselves to co-ordinate their child care services. Once they knew more about the type of care needed in their community, they felt that they would be better able to provide care to some families in the area at a reasonable cost. They decided to investigate help for starting a small business and the MCSS regulations. This entrepreneurial approach to the current situation could provide another option for families.

Keys to Successful Alliances

- joint management / decision making
- working environment encourages partnership, innovation, working towards common goal
- clearly established goals, with role of partners clearly identified
- environment for shared responsibility for success and failure
- joint planning and monitoring of initiatives, process and partnership
- recognized need for variety of roles, resources, skills and ideas
- leaders who know the long term goals

"Adaptability and flexibility are key to effective child care in rural communities where the conventional 9 to 5 work day is rare."
--National Coalition for Rural Child Care

Part D -- Clarify Purpose and Define Direction

Theory

When working with people from a variety of backgrounds, organizations, and interests, it is essential to spend time working out joint understandings. Without this common base, future steps will be doomed to failure. Trust and commitment come from everyone believing in the plan.

As the alliance members begin working together, there may be internal and external pressures, which make holding the group together difficult. If **trust and commitment** are not in place, these forces may break the alliance apart. Differences of opinion and conflict are a normal part of the process. Effective management of this "stumbling block" will result in a stronger team.

It takes time to develop a **common vision** of the potential results. It is necessary to review, and revise the vision to reflect the changing situation. With a shared understanding, the alliance can become more specific as it sets its goals and priorities.

An external facilitator can help the alliance members dig deep into their souls to honestly discuss their goals, and what they can realistically give to the initiative.

There are many worthwhile ways of addressing a problem or issue. Not all of them can be accomplished. A thorough knowledge of the community is needed to **decide what needs to be done first**. Needs assessments, inventory of resources, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, and statistical analysis can all provide information to help the core group and community pick out the best projects to work on.

Practice

Progress Report *-- A public meeting was held on the child care situation in the area. A facilitator lead the discussion so that all of those interested in the topic could be involved in the discussion. There was a good response from those invited from all sectors of the community, as well as the general public. By the end of the meeting, it was agreed to develop a plan that would result in a wider range of child care services for the area. A core group of five people volunteered to develop a report on the options possible.*

The core group has met several times to develop a draft version of the alliance's goals and objectives. There were some lively discussions. They reviewed the draft with some of the people that had been at the meeting to make sure they were on the right track.

Once they had some feedback, they proceeded to flesh out the plans. The planning process was helped by OMAFRA. At the end of their discussions, they had four potential ways of approaching the problem:

1. The core group could setup a time share program for themselves, where they would babysit each other's children.
2. The core group could form an organization using the "Hub Model" used in other communities. The organization would co-ordinate various activities to meet the child care needs of the community.
3. The core group could form an incorporated body to develop a licensed non-profit child care program with extended hours and weekend service.
4. The core group could encourage Frank to expand his existing child care centre in town to accommodate more children, and provide weekend and evening service.

Theory, continued

A co-ordinating body can work on **defining the structure and methods of operating** for the community alliance. A constitution, and alliance member agreements will help to glue the group together.

Once the group knows what it wants to accomplish, it can begin to put firm plans in place. The value of a good planning process is often overlooked, particularly when people are anxious to get started. (See Part E -- Take Action)

> "The fact that a large number of women are in the work force has affected family life and made child care a critical issue in rural areas, where problems are often compounded by isolation and a lack of public transportation. For some single parents, the presence or absence of child care means the difference between working and receiving social assistance.
> --Women In Rural Life, The Changing Scene

Consensus is a method of decision making in which all members actively discuss the issues surrounding the problem. The discussion results in the pooling of the knowledge and experience of the members. Although consensus decision-making takes a great deal of time, energy and group participation, it produces the most effective group decision.

Practice, continued

The four models were presented to the community at the second meeting. The four

options were discussed in terms of their effectiveness, the resources required and available, and the size of the project for their community. Once the pros and cons of each option was described, the community decided to go with option two. This choice will solve many of the problems and still be manageable.

Frank, the operator of the day care in town, may choose to expand his business to complement the plans of the group. He is investigating the feasibility of an "on farm" part of his business.

The originator of the child care initiative, June, had a good relationship with the local media as a result of her wide range of community activities. She knew that this was "news"--something that had not been done before, so the media would be interested. She made personal contact with the people she knew to ensure they would be present. The newspaper and radio station had good coverage of the meeting, so even more people are aware of the initiative, and are excited. For the committee, this means they have more good reasons now to make it happen.

The group knew that it needed some guidelines for its operation. So they wrote a constitution. The core group began to formalize the commitment of the individuals and organizations. There are some innovative ideas being used to carry out the first stage.

Part E—Take Action

Theory

This is when the alliance puts its plans into action. Volunteers are recruited to help with various activities.

A wide range of leadership skills are needed to help the volunteers achieve their goals. Decision making, motivation and meeting management skills will help a group work together. Volunteers with a variety of skills are needed to accomplish the various tasks. Media relations, and fundraising skills, as well as a wide range of contacts, will be needed.

It takes a keen eye to recognize and utilize each person's special talents. To make recruiting volunteers easier, know what motivates and excites them. There is a social aspect to most volunteer work which must be balanced with doing the work.

The leader of a work group must clearly explain the goal. The volunteers will suggest many ways to achieve the goal. A flexible approach, which incorporates the best ideas, will be most successful.

This approach must be balanced with getting the job done. An action plan, with mid-points and completion dates can be used to break a big job into a number of smaller steps. Periodic progress checks will help to avoid confusion, or falling behind others.

Once the implementation stage is reached, and tasks are completed, it becomes important to keep the momentum going. (See Part F—Sustain Involvement)

Practice

***Progress Report**—The volunteers of Anywhere Child Care Committee, after public input and investigation, presented four options at a public meeting. Once the "Hub Model" was decided upon, the group began to formalize their structure and function.*

The Core Committee developed an action plan which detailed the activities that needed to be done (see chart). They started with the after school program, since it looked like the easiest to put in place. They wanted it to begin in September so that promotion could be included in the Back To School issue of the school newsletter.

Each of the Core Committee members headed a subcommittee. They recruited volunteers from the community to be a part of the action. This opened up a vast network of resources. For example, a grandmother offered to clean and repair the equipment which was donated, and the homecoming committee decided that the proceeds of one dance would go to purchase new toys, books and equipment.

Occasionally there were disagreements over the best approach, but the committee chairs managed to work them out with the volunteers involved. Keeping the goal up front in their minds helped to reduce friction between individuals. A co-operative spirit was encouraged.

As all the various activities of the subcommittees were taking place, the chairs were in constant contact with each other. There were bi-weekly meetings during this phase and many phone calls in between. If one committee was facing a problem, the others helped to find solutions.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: For the Anywhere Child Care Committee to plan, implement and evaluate:
a. an after school recreational program in conjunction with the school, recreation department, and MCSS
b. to plan, implement and evaluate a toy lending library /play group which is run by the High School's Family Studies Class
c. to plan, implement and evaluate seminars of interest to parents and care givers

Objective	Who is Responsible	Resources Committed	Resources Required	Midpoint Check Date	Target Date
Formalize the structure and operations of the alliance	June with help from core committee	-Rural Community Advisor (OMAFRA) to facilitate and provide resources	Secretarial support Copying (Chamber of Commerce?)	November 1996	February 1997
Community needs assessment and resources inventory	Bob and Helen	-Rural Community Advisor (OMAFRA) for advice and assistance -High school students to tally results and report	Volunteers to survey community	December 1996	May 1997
Financial resources	Tim and Fatima	Lioness Club, municipality, experienced fund raiser, accountant	Nevada ticket outlets Non-profit group to sponsor purchase or tangible items	February 1997	July 1997
Lending library site and toys	Child Care Centre staff	-Media for toy appeal -grocery stores for donation sites, -churches for library site	storage cupboards (Joe's father?)	September 1996	December 1996
Parent and care giver seminars	Karen and Tom	Family and Child Resource Centre, Health Unit	Speaker fees, refreshment sponsors	November 1996	February 1997
Involve Family Studies class	June, teacher	child care information, child development training	practice babies and children	September 1996	January 1997
Evaluation	John and Toni	Rural Community Advisor for examples Board of Director commitment	Secretarial support for copying, mailing, phone calls	July 1998	December 1998
After school recreation program & investigate licencing	gym teacher, rec director, Betty, local childrens' organization	school and recreation department equipment, school gym Check with MCSS regarding licencing	recruit program leaders, non athletic programs	February 1997	September 1997

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Part F -- Sustain Involvement

Theory

This will likely be the most difficult part of the process. Once the initial plans are accomplished several things may happen:

- enthusiasm wanes
- volunteers get tired
- people feel they have done all they can
- the same people do all the work

conflicts may develop

To avoid this, a good plan for volunteer management is required. Both an evaluation and a celebration are in order. This will congratulate those involved for what has been accomplished, review what they have done, and begin to look at what is next. The evaluation can be done formally or informally.

New people and new ideas create enthusiasm and innovation. New people will have different networks and resources they can access. Good strong leadership is needed to keep the momentum going.

To keep the group motivated, consider the following points:

- Review your original plan. Is it still relevant? Or has something changed that may mean switching priorities?

- Don't be afraid to learn as you go. Recognize that not everything will go exactly as planned. The true test will be how the alliance handles setbacks.

- Don't be discouraged. You can't change things overnight. The community development process is not a quick fix. It is a long term process, the results of which can usually not be seen for more than 5 years. Take it one step at a time.

Practice

Progress Report *-- It has been a lot of work and not always easy, but more than a year later the group is beginning to see some results. It started with a few friends casually discussing their child care concerns. After talking to others in the community and a public meeting, a core group of volunteers began to put a plan together. Once the community decided on one of the four options, the real work started-- implementing the plan!*

Now a Board of Directors, made up of people interested in quality child care, meets quarterly with the community for ongoing monitoring, feedback on current initiatives and to identify emerging issues/needs. There are agreements in place which outline what each individual or group is bringing to the project. This helps to clarify expectations. The constitution, as well as the goals and action plans provide the chair with tools to guide the process.

The community now has:

1. An after school program located at the elementary school directly operated by the recreation department. The recreation department and volunteers offer a range of activities. High school students and volunteers are available to help students with homework.

2. The Toy Lending Library received many donations of new and used toys and books. Originally it was going to be operated out of a church, but that fell through. Rather than letting that stop them, they asked the local library to help. The Family Studies Program will operate this project. Although there is a high turnover rate of students, the teacher has remained a constant and provides continuity as well as supervision.

3. There have been a number of excellent seminars for parents and care givers. At first the response was discouraging, but as word got around of the

Theory, continued

- There are many print and human resources which can help you. The OMAFRA office has many resources on volunteer management, community development, and organizational development. (See Part A -- Introduction, for additional resources).

Practice, continued

quality, attendance increased.

One of the original ideas was for an on farm child care program. The Board of Directors were not able to put that type of program in place at this time. Frank and the day care in town, are market testing this type of service. An evaluation at the end of the summer will determine if it will be continued. Currently the alliance is investigating what is needed for teen youth, as it was a concern expressed at a community meeting.

ANYWHERE HERALD TIMES

Wednesday, March 19, 1997

The Anywhere Child Care Committee has had a very active year. It was just one year ago that the first public meeting was held to see what could be done about the limited child care options that were available in and around Anywhere.

The After School Committee started the unlicenced after school recreation program in conjunction with the school board and the recreation department. The Toy Lending Library is up and running, with a high school student over 18 watching every 4 children, and supervised by their teacher. At the same time, in an adjoining room, the care givers and parents visit and hear guest speakers.

June C. spearheaded this project at the beginning. June was quick to admit that the approach is what the community as a whole wanted. Her son enjoys the after school program. Her future involvement might include organizing affordable weekend and evening child care services.

When June was asked what made the Child Care Committee successful, she identified the following:
- shared workload for decision making, program implementation, and evaluation
- committees followed through on their plans
- people were willing to make mistakes,
- valuing and recruiting people with a variety of skills, and resources.

June said, "We were risk takers. At one point, we just had to go for it! You need a good mix of thinkers, and doers." Key community people add credibility to what you are trying to accomplish. The approach worked because each of the groups that took part of it were able to put aside their own ideas for the good of all involved. They pooled a little money from a number of organizations. Michael A., a director on the Board, says, "We started small and grew. There is no limit to what we can do if we work together."

Future plans for this energetic group includes a major fundraising campaign. A number of unique activities are planned which will support the child care programs. One of the secrets to this group's success is that they have fun as they work. It is like one big happy family.

June's final words of wisdom were, "The community should check with the local M.C.S.S. area office to ensure if programs need to be licenced."